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(SKINNY, from page 12)

to be about the same age, hit it off real good from the very start. Before long, they confide to Skinny that a wedding is being planned. They also reveal that as soon as the vows are exchanged, they are going to adopt Skinny, "official" Skinny's cup overfloweth and he can now see through the darkness—even with tear-dimmed eyes.

BUT ALAS AND ALACK! As everyone knows, there is many a slip 'twixt the lip of the nuptial kiss and the cup of joy that is quaffed before the act. Daddy Rabbit, like Skinny and Roman, cherishes his own kind of freedom too highly—is too much of a rolling stone—to settle down to the sedentary life of Lord of the Manor. When the bridge is completed, he and the rest of the construction gang move on to greener fields, leaving Miss Bessie—and the stunned Skinny—in the lurch.

Now there is no getting around it! Skinny is headed for the orphan's home, sure enough. But when the jolly, young man who is in charge of the orphanage explains that he will be allowed to visit Miss Bessie, Roman and Peachy on holidays and during the summer, and that he can take R.F.D. along with him, he philosophically adopts a brighter attitude toward his impending misfortune. When he further discovers there is a farm where he can work—just like the old days—and a school where he can learn to read and write, he becomes almost cheerfully reconciled to his fate.

As Skinny bids farewell to his old life at the hotel, everyone is aware that it is all for the best—the reader included. And far from a sad, cruel house of human bondage, Skinny finds the orphanage to be a happy home of sympathetic adults and friendly children, all working and learning and playing together.

THE CHARACTERIZATION OF SKINNY is indelibly etched against the author's intimate knowledge of semi-rural Georgia. The boy is a sort of latter-day Huckleberry Finn—carefree and venturesome, introspective and resourceful, and as much in control of his destiny as an 11-year-old orphan can be. His corn-pone glibness helps him through adversity, from which he always seems to emerge the wiser. And above all, he is a natural boy—a boy whose "gay philosopher" outlook on life, rooted in basic good sense, strongly indicates that he will grow up to be a kind and useful adult. The reader is glad to have made his acquaintance, and Skinny, in return, seems quite pleased to have met the reader. (And if YOU have been wondering whether Skinny is colored or white, you will have to read the book to find out!)

Robert Burch was born in Georgia, where he was "raised on faddock, grits and Uncle Remus stories." He has traveled extensively, including visits to many far-away ports while working on a Danish freighter, and he once lived in Japan.

His A FUNNY PLACE TO LIVE is a picture book for younger children. He also wrote TYLER, WILKIN AND SKEE, the story of three boys on a Georgia farm during the "Great Depression." Both earlier books, like SKINNY, were published by The Viking Press.

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